

quarters, a tank all to himself, mute evidence that he is well named. Thomas' first cousin, a smooth snapping turtle (Tom is an alligator s. t., and not even slightly smooth), has also been shifted to a new environment, more encouraging to introspection, because of a thoughtless habit of biting off his companions' heads.

The general discontent prevalent around the globe might seem to have involved the lower animals, too, but for a note of normalcy in our two long-necked turtles from Australia, who continue to fold their four-inch necks under five-inch shells in S-formation, and eat what is set before them without trying to put the bite on anybody.

Fourteen Floridians—Troosts' turtles—are being given light treatments for failing appetites. A soft-shelled turtle—like the foregoing, a gift from the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, and the only species that can breathe under water—completes the turtle count.

FEATHERED SERPENT DEPARTMENT

ORNITHOHERPETOLOGY is not one of the regularly established departments of the Academy, but it seems to be a subject worthy of mention. In a recent issue of *Pacific Discovery* (vol. IV, no. 6) reference was made to the feathered serpent as a Mexican symbol comparable to the winged horse, the unicorn, or the Chinese dragon.

The editor of *Pacific Discovery*, Don Greame Kelley, spends his spare time in the basement of his Fairfax home meddling with printer's ink, type, assorted papers, and his own printing press. He had nearly finished printing a book of poems by Dr. Leon J. Richardson, retired University of California professor and widely known classical scholar, when he suddenly realized he had to have a name for his press, but quick! His knowledge of the feathered serpent provided the answer.

The Feathered Serpent, we are happy to relate, has proved a lucky totem to the Press of that name. The first book of its imprint—Marion and Don Greame Kelley's first book—*Old Cronies: A Poetical Miscellany*, was selected as one of the "Western Books 1952." These 33 books, chosen by the Rounce and Coffin Club of Los Angeles as the best in design, printing and binding from both commercial and private presses of all the western states, will be on exhibit in the University of California Library, Berkeley, May 1 to 31.

NEW MEMBERS

THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS were elected by the Council at its meeting of March 11, 1952:

REGULAR MEMBERSHIP

Mr. James F. Clarke
Dr. P. S. Irwin
Mr. George W. Johnson
Dr. Woodburn K. Lamb
Mr. Raimund B. Worlitzer

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP

Mr. Robert P. Lilienthal

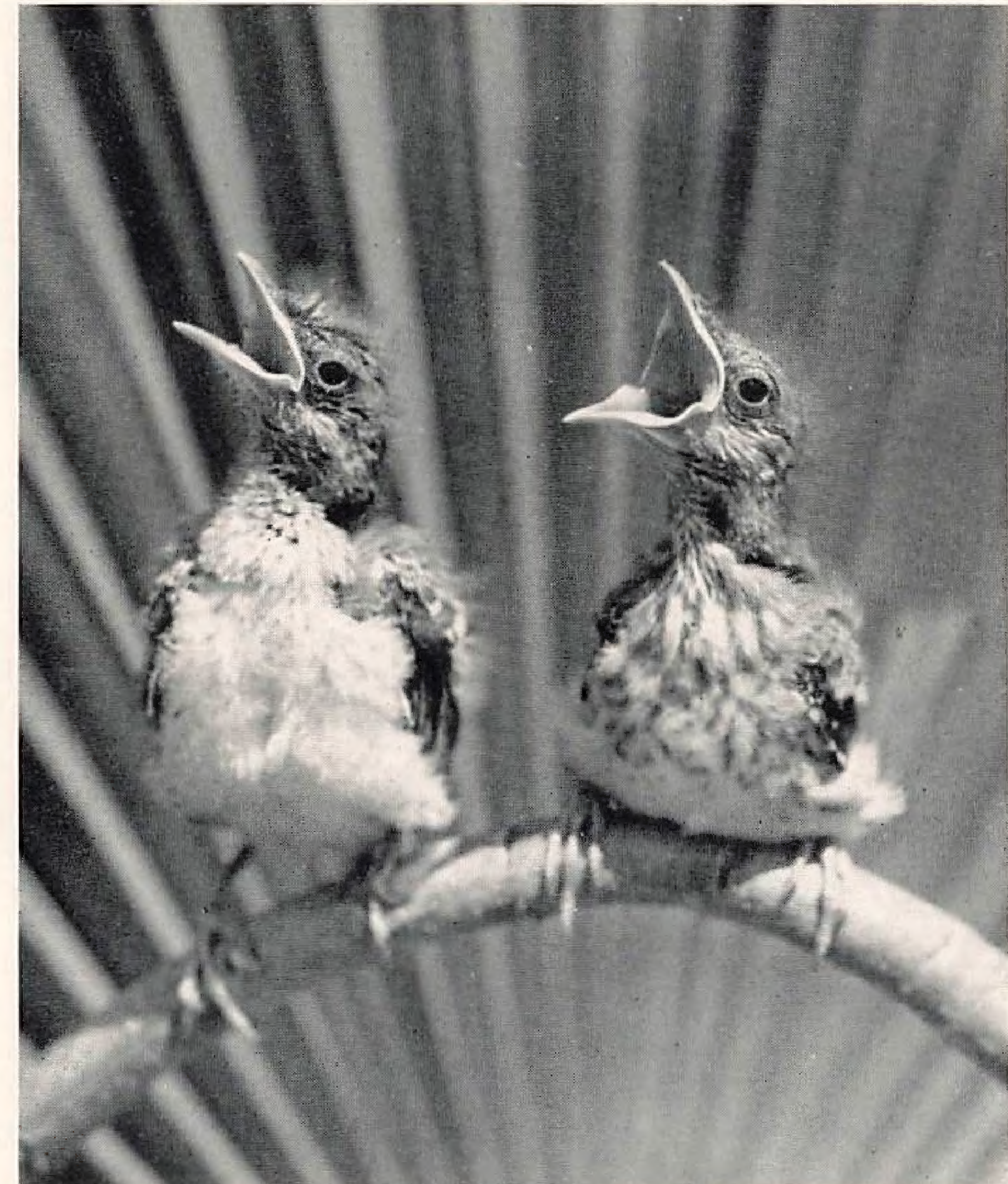
STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

Anita Fiala

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Photograph courtesy National Audubon Society

YOUNG MOCKINGBIRDS HOLD SPRING PRACTICE
(See page 2)

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April Announcement

THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING of the California Academy of Sciences will be held in the Morrison Auditorium of the Academy's Hall of Science, Golden Gate Park, on Wednesday evening, April 16, 1952, at 8 o'clock. Laurel Reynolds, noted wildlife photographer and lecturer, will present the topic

WESTERN DISCOVERY

Mrs. Reynolds, whose outstanding reputation as a wildlife photographer and lecturer is nation-wide, will show her color film "Western Discovery" as she takes her audience on an armchair journey along the Pacific Coast.

Following the trail of Cortez, Sir Francis Drake, Lewis and Clark—Laurel Reynolds has focused her camera from Mexico to Puget Sound on giant elephant seals, killer whales, porpoises and the rarely seen nocturnal murrelets and auklets—birds that raise their young in burrows on remote Mexican Islands.

In San Francisco Bay, tens of thousands of migrating shorebirds drift along a sandspit, moving before the camera like a living tide. On the journey to the Northwest, pileated woodpeckers, redwood trees in azalea time, and the silver trees of an Oregon Coast forest are part of the vivid pageantry. There, at the Reynolds farm, six young Canada geese at play provide richly humorous scenes against a backdrop of the snow-capped peaks of the Olympics.

The development of this delightful career from an earlier avocation is no doubt largely responsible for the participation and interest of the entire Reynolds family, and for the singular charm of presentation which Laurel Reynolds' audiences long remember.

PREVIEW OF NEW HABITAT GROUP

PERSONS ATTENDING Mrs. Reynolds' lecture on April 16 will also have a preview of our newest diorama, the South African Desert Group, now being completed. This is a dramatic habitat group featuring blesbok, springbok, and white-tailedgnu at the edge of the Kalahari Desert. With mounted animals of each species in the foreground, Belmore Browne has painted a background that conveys the impression of large herds migrating across the desert. The group was prepared under the direction of Cecil Tose, head of the Academy's Department of Exhibits.

"SCIENCE IN ACTION" RECEIVES P.T.A. AWARD

ON TUESDAY evening, March 25, the Academy's popular TV program, "Science in Action," received an award from the Seventeenth District, California Congress of Parents and Teachers, representing 25,000 members of the P.T.A. in San Mateo County. The award, presented by Mrs. G. J. Sirex, President of the Seventeenth District, was "for unusual merit in production of outstanding program content."

This is the sixteenth award to have been received by "Science in Action," and the second such award from a P.T.A. district, the previous one being an "Award of Merit" presented on February 28, 1952, by the San Francisco Second District.

SPELLING BEE

SELDOM HAVE we caused more alarm and consternation among readers of the NEWS LETTER than by our use, on last month's cover, of the word "incunable."

Our troubles started with the printer, who didn't even want to print it that way. Having overcome his resistance, and got our periodical printed and in the mail, we found we were really in for it. People called on the telephone. They wrote letters. They returned copies of the NEWS LETTER with "incunable" circled and annotated. One member brought his NEWS LETTER to the office in person, determined to prove that, if the editors could not be expelled, they could at any rate be outspelled. All in all, we learned that a lot of people read the NEWS LETTER—at least as far as page one!

There is, we take this occasion to assure our readers, such a word as "incunable" (pronounced in-*kew*-nable). It is an anglicized form of the Latin *incunabulum* (plural *incunabula*). We shall not go so far as to claim that it is a good word—it is not to be found in the Century Dictionary, which indicates that it is an upstart word of fairly recent origin; but it does appear in current editions of Webster, Funk and Wagnalls, and the Oxford English Dictionary. We promise, however, not to inflict it on NEWS LETTER readers again. We are saving it for our own projected handbook for crossword puzzle fans, provisionally titled, *Dictionary of Rare and Obscure Words, With an Appendix of Foreign Words and Phrases Seldom Met With*.

TURTLE TALLY

THE SONG OF SOLOMON, along with appropriate mention of flowers and the singing of birds, refers to the voice of the turtle as one of the good omens of spring. We assume that Solomon's reputation for wisdom was not acquired without a considerable knowledge of natural history; but we would want some clarification of that passage before accrediting him as a herpetologist. Our turtles, year after year, greet the spring without saying a word.

Nineteen carapace-covered specimens inhabit the Steinhart Aquarium. Thomas the Terrible Tempered—so named by Stanton Delaplane after a snappy interview during which Thomas did nothing but snap—has been given new